

**Draft Summary of the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group Meeting
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)
July 22, 2004**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group (RSWG) on July 22, 2004 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1	Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2	Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3	Handout: Assessment of Marina Facilities
Attachment 4	Handout: Future Floating Campsite Demand and Capacity
Attachment 5	Handout: Draft Addendum to Oroville Relicensing R-5 – Assessment of Recreation Areas Management
Attachment 6	Handout: Dangermond Group Comments – Future Recreation Developments and Operation

Introduction

Attendees were welcomed to the RSWG meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations and the desired outcomes of the meeting were discussed. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively.

Action Items – June 24, 2004 RSWG Meeting

A summary of the June 24, 2004 RSWG meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

Action Item #R112	Research the status of pending legislation related to the requirement to pay prevailing wage rates to workers on all State-administered projects.
Status:	Doug Rischbieter (DWR) explained that currently all State-funded watershed and trail projects are defined as public works projects (since 2001), and therefore all workers must be paid prevailing wage rates even if they are volunteers. AB 2690 is intended to change the definition of public works projects and would change the requirement that prevailing wage rates be paid to volunteer workers. This legislation is pending before the State Assembly.
Action Item #R113:	Post an electronic copy of Study R-17 (Recreation Needs Analysis) to the Oroville Facilities Relicensing web site so it can be distributed to interested stakeholders.
Status:	Relicensing Study R-17 (Recreation Needs Analysis) was posted on the Oroville Relicensing web site; this action item is complete.

Supplemental Information for Study Report R-7 – Reservoir Boating

Jim Vogel (EDAW) provided the RSWG with a handout summarizing the additional assessment of marina facilities as part of Study R-7 (see Attachment 3); this information will be included as an addendum to the study report. This assessment focuses on marina parking (vehicle only) and amenities, as well as floating restrooms. The assessment of parking at Bidwell Marina used a higher parking-per-slip guideline than that used for Lime Saddle Marina to compensate for the nature of use there. The parking deficiency at Bidwell Marina is exacerbated during high lake level

conditions. Lime Saddle is currently operating at approximately 65 percent capacity; therefore, it was evaluated under two scenarios – current and future conditions. Pete Dangermond suggested that a recent Department of Boating and Waterways study of boating needs in the Delta be reviewed to help in the assessment process. As for floating restrooms, the conclusions are that they are popular, functioning well, and meet observed existing needs; however, people would like to have more of them at Lake Oroville.

DPR reiterated its interest in the PG&E property near Lime Saddle Marina, which would be used to relocate the existing maintenance facility. It was noted that PG&E is currently divesting its properties and the parcel may be available to the State. The RSWG suggested that this information be documented somewhere in the study report or addendum.

The RSWG also discussed other issues related to parking including the use of natural space for parking, the need for more parking near horse trails, and concerns for adequate area to provide for visitors with boat trailers.

Future Floating Campsite Demand and Capacity

Chuck Everett (EDAW) led a discussion covering the demand and capacity for floating campsites at Lake Oroville (see Attachment 4). It is estimated that the future demand for floating campsites can range up to an additional 10 sites, which would double existing capacity. According to the Needs Analysis, the current demand is for roughly 3 new sites. It was noted that fees for the floating campsites affect use levels, as indicated by historical use patterns. The RSWG discussed limitations to adding additional floating campsites, including maintenance boat limitations (sites must be serviced daily) and physical limitations for siting new facilities (especially in narrow coves). It cursorily seems unlikely that an additional 10 sites could be installed due to physical siting limitations.

There was concern expressed regarding the methodology used to develop the demand estimates and a suggestion that the estimates are underestimating future demand from current levels because some believe these facilities are already operating past capacity. It was clarified that while these facilities are used extensively, they are not operating at 100 percent occupancy. One participant suggested that there be an adaptive management approach where the floating campsites are phased in and future demand would be periodically re-evaluated.

Social issues associated with the floating campsites include other boaters losing areas to use on the reservoir and a decrease in the quality of the recreation experience. Steve Feazel (DPR) explained that these floating campsites have a capacity of 12-15 people, cost roughly \$100/night to rent, and cost approximately \$100K to build. The existing rate of return on these facilities is not known but could be calculated.

Other issues to consider include: the tradeoff between buying floating campsites versus developing standard (and less expensive) land-based campsites; trends toward more group recreation uses which may require grouping several floating campsites close together in a pod; space availability near Lime Saddle; and noise issues on the water.

Review Comments on Reports

The RSWG was given the opportunity to provide comments on the study reports that were presented at the June 2004 RSWG meeting. A summary of the comments are provided below. If there are perceived errors in the report, the RSWG was asked to submit comments in writing to DWR. Comments for all studies are due to DWR by August 15, 2004. Some participants stated that the timeframe does not provide adequate time for comments, and therefore they are protesting

the process and will submit their comments directly to FERC. All comments received by DWR will be included in the package being submitted to FERC with the license application.

R5 – Assess of Recreation Areas Management

Prior to discussing specific comments, Iris Mayes (EDAW) distributed a draft addendum to the R5 study report (see Attachment 5) focusing on trails and recreation area management, specifically the multi-use trails issue and the Trails Committee Report.

The RSWG discussed the timing of a trails plan for the project. Doug Rischbieter (DWR) explained that a framework for management of the trails will be included in the Recreation Management Plan (RMP) that will be submitted to FERC as part of the License Application in January 2005, but there may not be enough time to add many specific details to it or develop a "Comprehensive Trails Plan." Issues discussed by the RSWG included the timing of a FERC decision on the multi-use issue, settlement negotiation group needs to discuss the RMP, and the pending DPR LOSRA General Plan update. Doug clarified that DWR is not waiting for DPR, but the intent is to have the DWR plan be consistent with DPR's efforts. The RSWG heard concerns by some stakeholders that the information appears to be biased toward multi-use trails and reaching conclusions without the evaluation of adequate information including trail log books and inclusion of stakeholders in the data gathering process. Doug noted that trail log books were reviewed by authors of relevant studies.

The RSWG requested that DPR keep the stakeholders informed on the LOSRA General Plan update process. Participants also discussed funding, including alternative fee structures, as an issue for recreation management. DPR is unable to provide information on current operations and maintenance costs for their recreation activities. The RSWG discussed the desire to keep fees reasonable and acknowledged the desire of the local community to be considered for reduced fees. The JPA supports local agency operation of the recreation areas below the Oroville Dam with support from DWR.

R8 – Recreation Carrying Capacity

The RSWG discussed the relationship between overcrowding and possible visitor decisions not to return to a facility. Some noted that when visitors arrive and are turned away they are less likely to come back, arguing for new facilities and trails before capacity is met. One participant suggested that the conclusion Lime Saddle is at spatial capacity is in error. The consultant team clarified that Lime Saddle was built with capacity to expand. The RSWG discussed the changes to fishing regulations that have occurred recently and how that might affect the results of the study.

The RSWG discussed the desire to have additional boat ramp launching capacity during high use periods. It was noted that the capacity (number of lanes) decreases during the peak recreation season as the reservoir is drawn down.

R13 – Recreation Surveys

Andy Atkinson (CDFG) noted that the report misses the first half of dove season, a significant hunter use period at the Thermalito Afterbay. The consultant team acknowledged that the survey efforts only caught late dove season.

The RSWG discussed the survey methodology and development of survey instruments undertaken by the RSWG and technical task forces early during the collaborative process. Jim Vogel (EDAW) explained that while not every visitor to Lake Oroville was surveyed, the effort went beyond what was required in the study plan and exceeds efforts found in other relicensings. A participant

suggested that equestrian events were not covered by the survey but Jim clarified that special efforts were made to survey equestrians including survey of the "LOVE Ride" event.

Some participants expressed concern that this report is presented as a draft while other reports labeled "final" have been based on information contained in this one. Jim Vogel (EDAW) pointed out that while the report is labeled "draft," the RSWG has seen the data presented several times within the RSWG setting. The RSWG agreed that a map of the survey sites would be useful; Jim Vogel agreed to provide a map.

R17 – Recreation Needs Analysis

The format of Study R-17 was well-received by the RSWG, particularly the reference or foundation document references in the summary tables. Participants suggested that the growth rates should be consistent with those used in Study R-12 and perhaps group future demographics by decade for analysis. Some participants felt that the start of the peak recreation season should be moved from May 15th to Memorial Day and the end moved up from September 15th to Labor Day since the length could affect the thresholds that trigger additional development in the future.

The RSWG discussed concerns with delaying facilities until after 2010 and the potential to include the Low Flow Channel in the Project Boundary so that Project needs might be met through project development in this area. Eric Zigas (City of Oroville) noted that the Low Flow Channel would be discussed at the settlement negotiation table, likely under Appendix B, which includes all non-jurisdictional actions included in the settlement. Chuck Everett (EDAW) clarified that some enhancements included in the Needs Analysis are suggested for consideration but are not "needs."

The RSWG discussed the definition of hardening as it relates to trail surfacing and Chuck Everett clarified that it would be specific to trail use, adding that equestrian trails are not hardened through paving because that would be inappropriate for the use. Choices for hardening, as well as trail development and maintenance, also include site-specific consideration of appropriate erosion control measures.

The RSWG discussed potential development of a management or oversight group that could monitor recreation use and recommend measures to address needs. Kevin Zeitler (ORAC) questioned the role another advisory committee would play, noting that while ORAC has been in existence for some time and active in the collaborative since the beginning, there is no reference to any of ORAC's work or information supplied during the collaborative process in the Needs Analysis.

Some participants expressed concerns about the methods by which data were collected, analyzed, and ultimately used in the Needs Analysis and expressed distrust in the results. Some are concerned that agreement was not reached on the various recreation study results before incorporating them into the Needs Analysis.

Pete Dangermond (JPA) provided a handout outlining his perspective on future recreation development and operation (Attachment 6).

Next Steps

Doug Rischbieter proposed that there be no RSWG meeting in August, and suggested that the RSWG plan no future meetings at this time. It was acknowledged that there would likely be a future RSWG meeting scheduled, but the date remains open.

Action Items

The following list of action items identified by the RSWG includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

Action Item #R114: Provide a map of the recreation survey sites to the RSWG as addendum to R13.

Responsible: Consultant Team

Due Date: August 2004